

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 01131 210922Z

10

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAM-01 /064 W

----- 125501

R 210836Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5658

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1131

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJ: STEPS TOWARDS REVITALIZING LABOR PARTY

1. SUMMARY: TWO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, AN EFFORT TO FORM NEW "CENTRIST BLOC" WITHIN LABOR PARTY AND CONVOCAION OF LABOR ALIGNMENT POLITICAL COMMITTEE FOR FIRST TIME IN TWO YEARS, HAVE HIGHLIGHTED MAJOR EFFORT CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO ESTABLISH PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S AUTHORITY OVER HIS OWN PARTY AND AT SAME TIME TO REVITALIZE IT FROM WITHIN. RABIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES ARE AWARE OF ERODING SUPPORT FOR LABOR PARTY IN RECENT YEARS, AND BROAD POPULAR EXPECTATION THAT TRANSITION OF POWER TO LARGELY SABRA GENERATION WOULD INVOLVE NEW CONCEPTION OF PARTY POLITICS, NOT JUST SUBSTITUTION OF PERSONALITIES. WHETHER LABOR PARTY CAN RISE TO CHALLENGE, GIVEN INERTIAL FORCE OF DEEPLY ENTRENCHED FACTIONAL RIVALRIES, WILL HAVE IMPORTANT BEARING ON RABIN'S ABILITY TO CARRY ISRAELI POLITICAL ELITE WITH HIM IN MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMIC DECISIONS AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER'S CHALLENGE. ONE OF MAJOR PROBLEMS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 01131 210922Z

FACING PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS BEEN AND REMAINS NECESSITY

OF ESTABLISHING HIMSELF AS LEADER OF LABOR PARTY AS WELL AS HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT. COMING FROM LARGELY NON-POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN ARMY AND DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, AND NOT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED WITH ANY OF LABOR PARTY'S FACTIONS, RABIN HAS BEEN NOVIATIE IN COMPLEX GAME OF ISRAELI POLITICS. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THIS PROBLEM FOR HIM AND WE KNOW SOME OF HIS PERSONAL ADVISORS HAVE BEEN URGING HIM TO TRY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

3. LABOR PARTY FACTIONALISM. ENDEMIC AND SO FAR INSOLUBLE PROBLEM OF LABOR PARTY HAS BEEN ITS DEFACTO DIVISION INTO THREE COMPETING FACTIONS--EXTENSION OF PARTIES WHICH CAME TOGETHER WHEN IT WAS FORMED IN JANUARY 1968. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES HAVE INCLUDED ALLOCATION OF CABINET POSTS BY FACTION RATHER THAN BY MERIT, CHRONIC INTERNAL RIVALRIES, AND CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE OF PETTY POLITICS DISCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ENTERING PARTY.

4. COLLAPSE OF MAPAI. MOST STRIKING PHENOMENON IN THIS CONNECTION, PARTICULARLY SINCE OCTOBER 1973 WAR, HAS BEEN GRADUAL DECLINE IN POLITICAL POWER OF MAPAI, WHICH HAD BEEN MAINSTREAM OF IDEAS AND PERSONALITIES IN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT EVEN BEFORE 1948, AND OF LABOR PARTY SINCE ITS FORMATION. IN COMPETITION TO SUCCEED MRS MEIR LAST YEAR, NEITHER OF TWO CANDIDATES--RABIN AND PERES--HAD AFFILIATION WITH MAPAI. MAPAI'S MAIN LEADERS HAVE EITHER DIED, RETIRED, OR BEEN SIDELINED. IN CURRENT CABINET, MAPAI HAS NUMERICAL PREDOMINANCE, BUT DOES NOT CONTROL KEY PROTFOLIOS. A MEETING LAST WEEK OF MAPAI NOTABLES, INCLUDING SAPIR, TRIED TO REVIVE MAPAI FORTUNES, BUT REPORTEDLY ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY.

5. LABOR PARTY'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE. RABIN, THEREFORE, FACES DUAL CHALLENGE OF REVITALIZING LABOR PARTY AND ESTABLISHING HIS CONTROL OVER ITS VARIOUS COMPONENTS. LABOR PARTY LEADERS ARE AWARE THAT ISRAEL PUBLIC VIEWS FACTIONS AS ANACHRONISM, AND THAT WITHOUT MAJOR REFORM FROM WITHIN, PARTY'S SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE. IF REFORMS ARE TO TAKE HOLD IN TIME TO AFFECT VOTERS' PERCEPTION OF LABOR PARTY, THEY MUST BE IMPLEMENTED WELL BEFORE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, DUE TO TAKE PLACE AT END OF 1977.

6. CENTRIST BLOC.
NUMBER OF LABOR PARTY LEADERS ARE ATTEMPTING TO CREATE INFORMAL "CENTRIST BLOC" WHICH WOULD GRADUALLY REPLACE FACTIONS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 01131 210922Z

THIS "CENTRIST BLOC" WOULD BE BASED ON LABOR PARTY'S REGIONAL CENTERS--PARTICULARLY TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM AND HAIFA--AND WOULD INCLUDE MEMBERS OF ALL THREE FACTIONS. HAIFA MAYOR ALMOGI AS WELL AS FORMER TEL AVIV MAYOR RABINOWITZ (NOW FINANCE MINISTER) AND JERUSALEM'S MOSHE BARAM ARE SPEARHEADING THIS INITIATIVE, TOGETHER WITH INTERMEDIATE GENERATION SHILUV ORGANIZATION (MEMBERS BETWEEN 30-40) LED BY MK MIKA HARISH. TEST OF WHETHER SUCH A CENTRIST BLOC CAN INDEED COME INTO EXISTENCE, AND

BE EFFECTIVE, WILL COME ONLY LATER THIS YEAR WHEN LABOR PARTY'S
INTERNAL ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE (AT AN UNSCHEDULED DATE).

7. LABOR ALIGNMENT POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETS. IN RELATED
DEVELOPMENT, PRIME MINISTER RABIN ON FEBRUARY 18 CONVENED FIRST
MEETING IN TWO YEARS OF LABOR ALIGNMENT (LABOR PARTY AND MAPAM)
POLITICAL COMMITTEE. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED HOST OF LABOR
ALIGNMENT PERSONALITIES INCLUDING ALL MINISTERS, MOST OF ITS
MEMBERS ON KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE,
TWO SECRETARIES GENERAL, CHAIRMAN OF KNESSET FACTION AND OTHERS.
NOTABLY MISSING, FOR ONE OR ANOTHER REASON, WAS "OLD GUARD"--
MRS MEIR, DAYAN, EBAN AND SAPIR. PRIME MINISTER UTILIZED
MEETING TO REVIEW LATEST DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER, AND
ASSESS CURRENT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN INTERIM
AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT. HE RECEIVED VERY BROAD EXPRESSION
OF SUPPORT FOR HIS POLICY. CONVOCAION OF THIS MEETING WAS
CLEARLY AN EFFORT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO TRY TO GET A BETTER
GRIP ON THE LEADERSHIP BOTH OF HIS OWN PARTY AND OF THE ALIGNMENT
(WITH MAPAM). GIVEN THE EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT, IT WOULD APPEAR
AT LEAST A PARTIAL SUCCESS. IT SEEMS CLEAR, THOUGH, THAT THE LARGER
GOALS--OF ELIMINATING FACTIONALISM--FOR THE PARTY--AND OF
ESTABLISHING CLEAR PERSONAL CONTROL--FOR RABIN--WILL DEPEND
TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THE IMAGINATION AND ENERGY WITH WHICH MATTER
IS PURSUED.
KEATING

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY UNITY, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV01131
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750062-0286
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750222/aaaaated.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <28 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STEPS TOWARDS REVITALIZING LABOR PARTY
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006